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To kill capital: Fight Kinnockism

ALL sorts of new 'maybe's now exist alongside the old certainties. Why? Because class politics in Britain has moved into a welcome, if complicated, new phase. What the next five years or so holds in store is far from clear. Yet that Thatcher's popular image has plummeted and her Iron Lady stand against Europeanisation is now seen in ruling class circles as being out of step with the times opens up all sorts of possibilities for communists.

Yes, the Tories are in trouble. The obnoxious squirt Cecil Parkinson denies it with oily references to mid term blues. But frankly it does not wash. The Tory share of the national vote in the EC elections was the lowest since 1868! British politics continues it trend towards greater volatility.

Behind this lie the historic problems faced by British imperialism. In the short term North Sea oil production has already peaked and is set to decline steadily. Inflation has reared its head again and interest rates are soaring. Any sort of serious downturn in the world economy will plunge Britain into the most profound crisis. These problems have exacerbated and drawn out into the open the strategic conundrum confronting Britain: maintaining the 'special relationship' with the US and being left on the fringes of the EC, or fully integrating into the Western European imperialist EC bloc and falling under German domination.

All the signs are that Britain is on the threshold of new times. We will either see a spiral down into the barbarity of capitalist war, unprecedented mass unemployment and despair or the dawn of a new socialist civilization. Which way we go will be decided entirely by the class struggle.

For all its trade union limitations fortunately today proletarian confidence is on the rise. The exact pattern is far from clear. Nonetheless two roads forward for the working class can easily be discerned. There is the road of Kinnockism - which will lead nowhere except capitalist austerity and crisis. And then there is the road of militancy and the class struggle which, if followed, in the end points to social revolution. A short time ago neither Kinnockism nor militancy were worth a brass farthing, according to media pundits. How things have changed!

Jack Conrad argued in the last edition of *The Leninist* that the working class has moved out from the defeatist shadow cast over our movement by Thatcher's victory over the miners in 1985. As even the bourgeois establishment admits, there is a growing proletarian combativity. Rail workers, dockers, local government workers, underground workers and a host of other sections have entered the fray fighting against 'rationalisation' and for wages that keep up with inflation and mortgage rates. Here is the first road, the road of class struggle.

The second can be seen in the results of the EC, Vauxhall and Glasgow Central elections. Only a complete philistine or a hopeless doctrinaire would dismiss them as insignificant. These elections point to strategic divisions which exist within the ruling class. The Tory vote tumbled. The elections also showed that, even with its position as the dominant party in Britain, Thatcher has not succeeded in 'killing socialism', ie Labourism.

If the Tories had only lost votes to minor parties such as the Greens, the SDP or the Liberal Democrats it would matter little. But what we have seen is the collapse of the old Alliance parties and a distinct revival in the fortunes of the Labour Party. Beside that the rise of the Greens is a side show.

Ten years ago the Alliance presented itself as the party nice people vote for. It soared ahead of both Labour and the Tories in opinion poll ratings. Now it's the Green's turn. Once they are tested bitter disillusionment is inevitable. Of this we are sure. And, as far as Kinnock is concerned, where the Alliance was a problem for Labour the Greens are a problem for the Tories. Most of their votes came from former Tories. What this means in parliamentary terms, as Kinnock has pointed out at every conceivable opportunity, is that if the results of the EC elections were repeated at a general election, there would be a 20 plus Labour majority ... and he would be safely ensconced in No10.

Which of the two roads should revolutionaries fight for?

For revolutionaries the road of militancy is infinitely preferable to that of Kinnockism. The Labour Party is a *bourgeois* party, albeit of the working class. It is fully committed to capitalism and always has been. It exists to dupe the working class and functions as a 'socialistic' safety valve in case of trouble. Real socialism will never come via the Labour Party. It will only come through working class self activity. It will come through working class combativity and working class strength, not through a vote in the House of Commons on a wet Monday afternoon.

Obviously the election of a Labour government and encouraging militancy are not mutually exclusive. But what we are talking about here is what is primary. Under certain *specific circumstances* we would support the election of a Labour government; if the socialist pretensions of Labour needed exposing in order to let working class combativity go to higher levels, for example. This is not the case today.

In an effort to deny the correctness of our counterposing the interests of Labourism to the interests of the working class some insist that the best conditions for working class confidence to develop is a Labour government; and that therefore we should all vote for Kinnock's party. This is an

absurd generalisation.

Politics has to be considered in the concrete. The calls to put Labour into office from the various varieties of Trotskyites and 'official communists' are a sign of desperation, a diversion in the here and now from the necessity of the fight for building an alternative to Labourism. What is primary is not the colour of the government defending the bourgeois order but the willingness of the working class to fight that order.

Of course, the upturn in working class militancy we see today is still fragile, it certainly is limited by its trade union consciousness. It also must be admitted that it still exists more in terms of potential than reality. It has certainly not yet scored a decisive victory which would act as an example which all sections of the working class would seek to emulate and build upon. Nonetheless, potential there is, and revolutionaries have a sacred duty not to belittle it - RCP and *Marxism Today* style - but to do all in their power to nurture, encourage and generalise it.

So what of the Kinnockite alternative?

No revolutionary should have any socialistic illusions in Kinnockism. Neither, for that matter, should any Labour voter. Nor will they. Kinnock has made it crystal clear that he is committed to Nato, the bomb and parliamentary democracy. He solemnly promises to shore up a decomposing British capitalism better than the Tories.

In so saying, Kinnock might have upset poor old Arthur Scargill, who foolishly says he joined the Labour Party in order to smash capitalism. But the fact of the matter is that Kinnock and Kinnockism is fully in line with the history of Labourism. Labour governments have carried out colonial wars, driven down workers' wages and smashed strikes, not capitalism. In spite of the fancy and pompous rhetoric, what policy review Kinnock is promising is another *typical* Labour government.

That he is doing so openly - open, that is, for any bourgeois or intelligent worker - before he's actually got governmental responsibility, should leave no room for doubt or excuses. He will not dash the socialistic illusions of the masses with the awful reality of Labourism after their votes have got it into office, because he is not sowing any socialistic illusions. He speaks in the name of capitalist realism, not reformist utopianism.

What then are the prospects for the immediate future?

• **The Tory Party.** Divisions in the Tory Party are, like the rise in militancy, still tentative. But the cracks are all too clearly there. It is not simply a matter of Heath - the Trotsky of the Tory Party - sniping at Thatcher because he doesn't like her approach. As we have pointed out, the bourgeoisie in Britain is confronted with a strategic conundrum over the EC. This, and the

recent electoral drubbing, will boost the standing of Michael Heseltine and encourage a whole swathe of Tory MPs into opposition against Thatcher.

Having raised the possibility that deep divisions are about to open up in the Tory Party, this should not lead us to the conclusion that it will necessarily lose the next general election. What is significant is that the Tories now look beatable where before they did not. This is good for the working class will to fight and can only encourage the Tory government towards giving concessions rather than reinforcing its intransigence.

Of course, as things stand at the moment it does not look as though it will be beaten. But anyway we do not put the alchemy of parliamentary politics at the centre of our politics, but the proletariat. Having urged caution concerning premature talk of a Tory election defeat, the opening up of divisions in the Tory Party is central. Through them mass discontent with the effects of inflation, high mortgage rates, the Poll Tax, restrictions on trade union activity and anything and everything else can find expression. That is of far greater importance than any general election.

• **The Labour Party.** The upturn in the fortunes of the Labour Party will greatly strengthen the hand of Kinnock and his 'new realist' team. He will insist that his revamped Labourism is attractive to the electorate and that there is no excuse for rocking the boat either inside the party at conference or outside it through illegal defiance of the Poll Tax or wildcat strike action.

The Labour left is therefore in a very weak position. Some in its ranks will, as a result, simply slink off to the right and towards acceptance of the policy reviews' Thatcherite ideology. Others will find themselves further isolated and subject to bureaucratic attack.

So the prospects for the Labour Party have improved, while the prospects for the Labour left have diminished. The decline of the Labour left is not something we worry about in itself. It also has to be noted that it could be only a short lived decline, for we are seeing a revival in working class combativity which, if it consolidates itself, will have the general short term effect of shifting British politics to the left.

• **Militancy.** The first port of call for a newly created layer of militants would most likely be the Labour Party. To keep them loyal to Labourism and, for that matter, to keep them under control and within the confines of bourgeois politics will prove very difficult for Kinnock, given his singleminded prime ministerial ambitions. What we have before us therefore is a very contradictory position. Nonetheless a revival in working class militancy which actually chalks up a really significant victory will, in all likelihood, necessitate Kinnock giving the Labour left

more prominence, prestige and representation.

• **Communists.** What tasks does this complex picture pose for communists? It would be criminally wrong to suggest that the rise in militancy is automatic and will smoothly proceed along the road to communism. Unless communist forces are organised into a re-forged Communist Party and unless our Party gains the leadership of the advanced section of the working class, there is every reason to believe that the present growing wave of elemental working class anger will be blunted by the shenanigans of the trade union bureaucracy or diverted off into the hopeless dream of changing the Labour Party. We must make this absolutely clear.

Without a re-forged CPGB nothing long term or permanent can be gained, because without it socialism will remain a hopeless dream. For the working class to liberate itself it must be won to the politics of communism, which point not only to making gains within the capitalist system but busting through that system to socialism. For this it is essential to subordinate everything to the struggle for the Party.

Having set our sights on this strategically essential goal it must be recognised that, although it is layed low today, our main opponent is left Labourism (and its left adjuncts).

To fight left Labourism it is essential to stand independently of it. Naturally, therefore, communists will not merge with it organisationally, as have *Militant*, *Socialist Organiser* and assorted Trotskyites. Neither will we merge with it politically, as has the SWP, the *Morning Star* and its CPB, the NCP and other 'official communists'.

Such a course is typical of right opportunism. It leads these organisations into actually trying to give Labourism socialist pretensions when its leadership has none, or perpetuating the myth that a right wing Labour government is preferable to a Tory one. In short, such organisations become indistinguishable from the Labour left. They become part of the problem, not the solution.

Less important, but still dangerous, are those who pretend that the Labour left represents no threat because it is 'dead' and therefore not worth bothering about. The chief advocate of this line of reasoning is the RCP - the Revolutionary Coroners Party. Yet, as shown by the EC elections, Labour hasn't got both feet in the grave. Social democracy - the ideas of the bourgeoisie in the working class movement - will in fact live as long as commodity production continues. It will not die. Labourism will have to be killed through *socialist revolution and the building of communism!*

David Sherriff



Fortnightly paper of the Leninists:
for a genuine Communist Party

IS THERE a crisis of socialism? If by that is meant the bureaucratic socialism of 'official communism' the answer can only be in the affirmative. It has run out of all possibilities, not least in the USSR - the world's revolutionary centre. Gorbachev is treading in the backward footsteps of 'market socialism'. Where does this lead?

In Hungary 'communist' leaders praise the 1956 counterrevolution, call themselves social democrats and advocate leaving the Warsaw Pact. Poland is no different. "Government experts" have agreed to a Solidarnosc plan under which *all* state owned enterprises would be handed over to a "liquidating agency" before they are sold off to investors at "home and abroad" (*Financial Times* June 22 1989).

a peaceful democratic counterrevolution. Peaceful, because it will not smash the state; the Polish 'socialist' police and army will defend the new capitalist property relations. Democratic, because as shown by the recent round of elections the masses will not lift a finger to defend the old order.

There are those centrists who are resisting the restorationist trend, in Romania, the GDR and Czechoslovakia for example. Their opposition is at best a holding operation; battenning down the hatches on open debate only further alienates the masses.

We are at a great historical turning point. A 1914 (when the parties of the Second International went over to their 'own' ruling classes) only on a bigger scale, involving as it does states as well as parties. With Eastern Europe this is bound up with the relative decline of the USSR and the rise of Federal Germany.

Federal German capital is the front runner in schemes to carve up the decrepit industries of Poland and Hungary. Federal Germany has its eye on extending its sphere of influence throughout Eastern Europe. And Federal Germany is intent on recreating a Greater Germany which, through its domination of the EC, would rival the USA as the capitalism's leading power.

However the capitalist world is riven with intractable problems and faces a devastating new general crisis which can only but dwarf the previous, 1914-1949, general crisis. Capitalism cannot escape its fate, neither can it prevent Germany and Japan being forced into new attempts to forcibly redivide the world. Yes, as long as capitalism lasts the danger of a World War III grows. Far from the collapse of the post-World War II order ushering in democracy and stability, peace and plenty capitalism will produce the opposite.

The only alternative is world revolution. Because it is the only way capitalism's contradictions can be resolved, revolution is not the far off prospect it seems to the pessimistic philistine. It is instructive to note that between the collapse of the Second International and the world's first socialist revolution it was a mere three years and only five before the new, communist, International was formed.

Nor are the prospects as bleak as they might at first appear in the socialist countries. The masses there believe that bureaucratic socialism will be replaced by Swedish type social democracy and Swedish type living standards. They will be bitterly disappointed. Even Solidarnosc leaders admit that the restoration of capitalism will bring dramatic price rises, mass unemployment and plummeting living standards. They fear a "social explosion", which they admit Solidarnosc could not control: it will be either a proletarian political revolution or a return to the sort of semi-fascist regime Poland suffered throughout the 1920s and 30s.

So even if the genuine communist forces in the socialist countries fail to lead a political revolution we are sure it will only be a short time before they come back, having ruthlessly criticised past efforts, strengthened to lead a new social revolution.

The Editor

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LETTERS

Simplistic rhetoric

Your reply to my last letter is simplistic rhetoric. Firstly, 'economism' as defined by Lenin is the refusal to accept the political struggle of the proletariat, an attempt to limit party activity to agitation around strikes etc, ie economic struggles. When I reject support for bourgeois political slogans, it does not entail a rejection of politics.

I hold that imperialism, as a worldwide system, can only be fought against, in the interests of the communist revolution, by the concerted efforts of the world proletariat, not by invoking Ireland's "national democratic rights." Of course, it is perfectly possible to fight a particular imperialism in the interests of another faction of capital under the banner of "national liberation".

The main thrust of my argument is simply ignored. This is that the platform of the leftist acolytes of the IRA is not unique, that it is an expression of a general tendency in the weaker capitalist states towards a form of state capitalism. This reaction on behalf of national capital against international capital we have seen in Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, etc.

Again, the question of the development of class consciousness in Ireland is completely ignored. Quotes from Vladimir Ilyich's *Collected Works* will not help much here - how about a historical materialist analysis using the Marxist method? My contention that the struggle against the contamination of the working class by bourgeois ideology, of which nationalism is a particularly virulent strain, is indispensable for the generalisation of revolutionary class consciousness remains undisputed.

The assertion that the task is to replace one form of bourgeois domination by another, supposedly more 'obvious' one, so that the not-very-bright workers will at last see the light and join the party, is truly woeful. The struggle for socialism begins now, against the myth of 'democratic rights', not in some stagist never-never land of the future.

Paul Burgess
London

David Sherriff replies: It is natural and correct that we try and single out the main issues of contention. A full 'historical analysis' is impossible in response to letters from readers such as Burgess. Our reply will again, therefore, be brief.

1. Burgess does not seem to be aware that Lenin branded socialists who dismissed the democratic right of self determination "imperialist economists".

2. We do not claim that the IRA is a socialist organisation. We support it only as far as it fights imperialism. The nationalism of the oppressed has to be distinguished from the nationalism of the imperialist oppressors. Lenin did not counterpose the struggle for national liberation and socialism. In our view he was correct.

3. Burgess is anti-Leninist. He ought to have the honesty to openly state his hatred of Leninism with its defence of democratic rights. Yes the struggle for socialism begins now. Strange then that Burgess left our organisation because he refused to accept organisational discipline. Now having discovered a suitable ideological cover for his lazy life style he lectures us about revolutionary

practice. That is his democratic right. It is also our right to dismiss his simplistic leftist rhetoric with the contempt it deserves.

Wales

If my booklet *What's so great about Britain?* is bad then it deserves a bad review - and it certainly got one from Ceri Rhys (*The Leninist*, No76). Unfortunately, I have to say that a bad review in this case means a failure to confront the arguments and a deliberate distortion of the booklet's message. I don't mind being attacked for what I do believe in - that is the basis of a Marxist dialogue - but I strongly object to being attacked for what I haven't said.

At no point do I suggest, as Ceri Rhys says I do, that "if we can get more bobbies on the beat (with Welsh accents of course) everything will be hunky dory". Far from acting as a left advisor to the police I explain how the police maintain the laws of Britain and that the central law of the British state protects capitalist property relationships. In addition, I point out that police Special Patrol Groups have been set up as a specially trained, public order force and continuously place the forces of law and order as the protectors of the British state, which I say later were used to smash the miners during the 1984/85 Strike. These are hardly the beliefs of a "left advisor" to the police force.

May I just plead for a bit of real criticism? Nowhere in the booklet do I advocate cutting the ties between the English and Welsh working class. The fact that we believe in the self determination of the Welsh working class does not mean that we believe in cutting ourselves off from the working class of the rest of Britain. There is nothing disgusting about asking whether the Welsh working class should continue to suffer the British political system. If Ceri Rhys cannot understand the difference between socialist struggle and nationalist struggle, let me just explain. The socialist believes in the working class gaining state power, which is what we believe in, and the bourgeois nationalists believe in the capitalist class gaining and keeping state power. The question is whether the political expression of the workers' state power should occur through capturing control of the British state or by the seizure of state power in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. At present we all face a British ruling class, which is effectively an English ruling class, in control of the British state. If it is not asking too much, why not confront the question of whether Britain is truly a nation and whether there is any explanation of the geographical difference between the "continued hold of bourgeois ideology - reformism - for the backwardness of our class", which is, in reality, the English working class.

Tim Richards
Wales

Class hatred

Any analysis of recent events in China must begin with the admission that few sources of reliable intelligence are available. It would be a profound mistake for any communist to place reliance on the outpourings of the bourgeois mass media which, in an orgy of *Schadenfreude* and class hatred, has ex-

ploited events in order to carry out a sustained attack on communism itself. Each of us, if we are to defend unconditionally the gains of the Chinese revolution, must guard against any action or statement which could objectively give aid to the class enemy in his dirty work.

The editor of *The Leninist* correctly draws our attention to the economic factors underlying popular discontent in China: the seemingly impressive rates of growth that have arisen out of the economic reforms of the last decade have been achieved at the cost of inflation, unemployment and wide ranging anti-socialist and anti-social phenomena.

In particular the development in an uncontrolled fashion of cooperative and private enterprise mechanisms has led to an objective deterioration of the living standards of the people because this activity has been a cover for speculation, profiteering, price rigging and so on.

Evidence suggests that people in responsible positions in the Communist Party and the administrative apparatus have enriched themselves through their participation in this activity, either directly or by means of patronage. Not surprisingly, those who have acquired economic power or personal wealth as a consequence of these alien phenomena now wish to give political expression to their burgeoning class interests by destroying the power of the party, and thus creating the essential preconditions for a counterrevolution.

It is one of the ironies of recent events that the student and intellectual 'movement' which initiated the demonstrations was an expression of popular anger at the economic abuses of the new bourgeoisie, yet had the students' political objectives been achieved, it would have been precisely these new bourgeois elements who would have reaped the benefit.

I can understand why the editor of *The Leninist* uses aspects of the present situation as a stick to beat Gorbachev with, but condemning Gorbachev's "complete lack of proletarian internationalism" misses the point. As the editor himself says, the Chinese revolution must be defended unconditionally, and it is a moot point whether that cause would be served by souring Sino-Soviet relations at a time when the Chinese Communist Party has few enough friends. Of course, the USSR has adopted a course which is intended to preserve its recent diplomatic successes, but this does not automatically mean that its attitude is craven or cowardly.

I believe that developments in China will have taught the CPSU's policy makers some salutary lessons about the direction in which any experiments with 'market socialism' are likely to lead. Furthermore the processes of democratisation in the USSR are likely to be influenced favourably by the perceived need to prevent alien class interests from exploiting economic discontent as a means of canvassing counterrevolutionary political aspirations.

M G Malkin
Surrey

Note: Letters have been shortened due to lack of space. For political security we have changed certain names, addresses and details.

WRITE OR RING

If you would like to reply to any of these letters, raise questions or comment on articles in *The Leninist* please write to The Editor, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX. Or phone us on 01-431 3135.

An outstanding militant

Jack Dash died at the age of 83 at the London Hospital, Whitechapel on Thursday June 8. We were very proud to have had him as the Honorary President of the Unemployed Workers Charter



Jack speaks at his last public meeting

JACK DASH was an outstanding rank and file dockers' leader, veteran of the National Unemployed Workers Movement and a principled communist. His life stands as an inspiration for all who fight for the liberation of mankind from the shackles of capitalism. On the day he died dockers walked out in an unofficial strike action against the Appeal Court decision to ban their national strike, despite the pleas of Ron Todd for them to stay at work until the lifting of the injunction. This action was a fitting tribute to the work Jack did over the years in building up the dockers' organisational muscle.

Jack Dash spent many years fighting not only the London and Liverpool port employers, but also the staid and anti-communist bureaucracy of his union, the TGWU. Unofficial action – organised through the Royal Docks Liaison Committee – was his weapon and Jack and his kind bequeathed a precious legacy of militant action to rank and file dockers.

Jack Dash, unlike some, never claimed to have been a 'life long communist'. He was well aware that his communist consciousness did not begin with birth. It began to stir during the General Strike of 1926. The sight of troops in London protecting scab lorries had a profound impact. But it was the experience of unemployment that proved to be the key. In his recently reprinted autobiography, *Good Morning Brothers!* he describes how he first came across the UWC of its day, the National Unemployed Workers Movement.

"During my spells of unemployment, I had found time to do some reading and political study. I joined the Labour Party, but I did not remain a member for long. One day, after signing on at the Walworth Road Labour Exchange, I found that the National Unemployed Workers Movement was holding a meeting. I stopped to listen. The speaker was a powerfully built chap with a rugged countenance and a stentorian voice. He was explaining the reason for the mass unemployment and the need to get organised to demand an end to the Means Test and the closing down of the work camps -Belmont in particular.

That was the place where you could be directed when you had exhausted your twenty six weeks miserable unemployment benefit: you made an application for relief and then were directed to this labour camp while your dependants were issued with food.

"The speaker went on to explain why there should be liaison between the Unemployed Workers Movement and the trade unions. Each was dependent on the other, he said. If there was no political understanding, the unemployed would always be used as cheap labour as a constant threat to those in work, while we, the unemployed, needed the strength of the trade union movement to pressure the government into removing the Means Test and providing adequate maintenance and increased benefits.

"All this made good sense to me, and when the speaker had finished his talk and answered questions from the crowd and the chairman had appealed for a collection and closed the meeting, I stayed behind. I was deeply impressed by all that had been said and wanted to continue the discussion with the speaker. Arising out of our conversation I learned he was a casual dock worker and his name was Patsy Hicks. We became friends, and as a result of many keen and heated discussions we had together, and the reading of some of the books he recommended, I began to do some political rethinking."

Doing some political rethinking led him to join the NUWM and the Communist Party. Under the guidance of the Party, with the upturn in the economy at the beginning of World War II, he managed to get himself into the docks. It was here as a rank and file dockers leader that he rose to national prominence. The bosses' media grew to hate him as the personification of militancy and working class confidence.

After he retired from the docks in 1970 Jack did not let up on his political activities. He spoke at countless meetings, hammering away at the necessity for working class organisation and socialism. When the UWC was formed he gladly accepted our invitation to become its Honorary President. Although he had left the Euro CPGB for the CPB he was proud to be associated with us and our cause. He told us that some of its leaders objected to his role in the UWC. Sectarianism, however, was completely alien to him. He told them where to get off. He would side with those who were actually fighting, not merely prattling.

Just before he was admitted into hospital he insisted – in spite of doctor's advice – on speaking to our UWC meeting in central London to mobilise for the June 15 action. All the passion and fire was still there. He urged the UWC to continue the struggle of the "pioneers of our great movement" for a

socialist Britain where the people will be the rightful owners of the land and the means of production and for the dignity of every single being.

The UWC was honoured to raise its banner on the commemoration march for Jack Dash, alongside dockers from as far as field as Liverpool and Scotland. We gave out a leaflet on our comrade which was well received by the dockers present. Unfortunately however some CPBers dishonoured the memory of Jack Dash and indulged in distasteful sectarianism. This has to be said.

Apart from a few CPB types who developed selective blindness at the funeral itself, Mike Naughton's report in the *Morning Star* suffered from the same problem. He mentioned every single banner that was raised on the march ... except one. The Royal Group of Docks Shop Stewards Committee, Mersyside Dock Labourers Shop Stewards Committee, the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions, the Communist Party of Britain and the *Morning Star*. "Jack's own newspaper" – all got a namecheck. But 'Jack's own unemployed organisation', the UWC, was omitted.

The UWC has written an open letter to the *Morning Star* requesting it corrects its report and expressing our hope that this was a mistake rather than deliberate act of sectarian censorship. We pointed out that sectarian narrowness was totally alien to Jack Dash. Because of this it would be a disservice to the man's memory to allow sectarianism to go unchallenged.

Despite our political differences, Jack Dash recognised the importance of the UWC and spared no effort to support our initiatives. As he said at our packed fringe meeting at last year's TUC:

"The only way you learn the lessons is to be active ... The job you're doing is a tremendous job. The working class loyalty has not been lost. But you've got to fight. I wish you well in your struggles and while I've got a breath left in my body, if I can be of help to the unemployed workers movement, I'll do so."

We salute Jack Dash. We rededicate ourselves to the struggle which inspired this remarkable man – the fight for human dignity, the fight for revolution. He expressed his revolutionary conviction, his will to revolution and the smashing of the state, at the end of *Good Morning Brothers!* with a quote from Omar Khayyam. It serves as a fitting motif for his life:

"Ah Love! could thou and I with fate conspire To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire, Would we not shatter it to bits – and then Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire!"

Mark Fischer
(UWC National Organiser)

The innovative structure and militant action of rank and file London tube workers have challenged both the Tory anti-trade union laws and the dead hand of their own union bureaucrats. Now, the task must be for the rank and file of the union to equip itself with a political strategy, not simply an organisational framework, to take on the Tories. The very democratic local and mass coordinating meetings are the forum where militants must clarify their political platform. And the key to that must be to forge unity with other workers, most immediately transport workers currently entering the battlefield for their own demands: the rail and bus workers. Increasingly, class battles are running up against the brick wall of the Tory anti-trade union laws. Organisational measures, no matter how clever, can only keep the law off workers backs for just so long. The demand that can unite workers across section divides is for the smashing of these repressive laws. This must become a key element of a strategy for victory for tube workers or any section of workers.

The June 15 nationwide strikes and marches against Employment Training were an important step forward in building the fightback against the Tories' cheap labour scheming. In London, the Unemployed Workers Charter took the lead in building June 15 as a genuine day of action. We went to trade unionists and argued that they must take strike action to join the march on the day, in recognition of the fact that ET is an attack on employed workers as much as unemployed. On the day, we built a march of around 150 unemployed workers and their supporters in London. We took the message of the UWC to literally thousands of workers in the course of building for this march: therein lies the success of the day. Up and down the country, marches, pickets and occupations of jobs centres hammered home the message. Using June 15 and the contacts we established in the course of the campaign as a springboard, we now plan to build for a lobby and march on this year's TUC in Blackpool, starting from Manchester, where there is a lively and growing UWC branch. See the next issue of *Unemployed Organiser* for more details.



• A sharp design and a punchy message – the UWC's Smash ET Tee shirts, designed by a Workers Theatre Movement comrade, are being snapped up fast. £5 (employed), £3.50 (unemployed). Send cheque or postal order now to UWC, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX.

We announced in the last edition that *The Leninist* is organising three seminars on August 12 and 13. Comrades interested in taking part should contact us at the usual address. Registration for the weekend school is £5. This is orientated to the work of Hands Off Ireland!, which will obviously be very active around this time, given that it is the weekend of the 'Time To Go' demonstration, on which HOI! is organising the anti-imperialist contingent. The day after the demo, on the morning of Sunday 13, HOI! is holding a conference of those active in the campaign to assess its work in the building of the contingent and to discuss the way forward for Irish solidarity in its aftermath. There are many who, having raised 'Irish solidarity' in the Labour Party constituencies, will want to drop the whole issue for another 10 years. Not us. Already, in mid July, in the run up to the 'Time To Go' demonstration, HOI! is organising a speaking tour with Eamon Mullen of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, who recently successfully appealed against his exclusion from Britain. This will cover a number of cities nationally. If you can help in organising the tour, or are interested in taking part in the school or conference, contact Hands Off Ireland! at BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX; Tel: (01) 431 3135. Join the resistance!

On course



No doubt because of the non-appearance of *The Leninist* in May and the fact that our keenest supporters are channeling all their efforts into ensuring that our £20,000 Sixth Summer Offensive is a resounding success, we have not been flooded with contributions towards our £600 monthly fighting fund. Nonetheless donations there have been, adding up to a total of £254 which, all things considered, is not at all a bad effort. In particular we would like to thank comrade AS in the West Country who, in spite of really pressing and increasingly bad financial difficulties, has more or less kept up a steady flow of £5 and £10 donations. Thanks must also go to a first time donator who is the secretary of a Euro CPGB branch in the Eastern District and comrade WT who sent in a magnificent £50. If other readers follow these examples we should meet our target in July ... we might even bust through it.

DEAR COMRADES, as is our tradition with the Summer Offensive we will use this launch speech to deal with some of the key questions of the day. Let us begin with the situation in China.

1. China's crisis and its lessons

Events in China are still unfolding. Troops have been moved into the centre of Beijing. The occupation of Tiananmen Square has been violently broken; hundreds, perhaps thousands have been killed. We are not yet in a position to make a precise judgement as to what exactly has taken place in China, nonetheless it is beholden on us to state our views now - honestly, openly and in the spirit of proletarian internationalism.

Whatever the outcome of the present situation no one should underestimate its importance. The Chinese are a great people, a fifth of humanity. Their revolution was great, second only to October. No communist would deny any of this.

It is notable therefore that Gorbachev and his *Morning Star* and CPB echoes in Britain have done their best to downplay what is going on in China, calling it an 'internal affair' or a 'protest'. This reveals a complete lack of proletarian internationalism and a miserable diplomatic attempt not to upset the Chinese leadership too much. As far as these forces are concerned the working class will not find liberation through the world revolution but should be sealed into national tombs. They do not put the interests of the world revolution first. This is not the case with us. Real friends of socialism in China - unlike the 'official communists' - have to tell the truth no matter what and, above all, must draw lessons for the world revolution from what has happened.

We have seen far more than a protest. It is also far more than the Gorbachevite style 'democratic revolution' from above the Euros so much admire in the Soviet Union. What we have seen in China came from below. There has been a rebellion of the Chinese people against the bureaucratic form of the Chinese socialist state. We say that the demands for democracy are just and in the interests of socialism in China and world wide.

The masses displayed enormous courage, discipline and ideological loyalty to socialism. Although they erected a polystyrene model of the Statue of Liberty, it must be recognised that this is not only a US national symbol, but also a universal celebration of the American Revolution of 1776, a symbol of enlightenment and international friendship (it was a gift from the revolutionary people of France). But whatever ideological confusion existed there can be no doubt that the masses were not anti-socialist. They sang the *Internationale*, carried the red flag and portraits of Mao Zedong - he personified revolutionism, a man who was seen as above corruption.

This bodes well for a future when the state is transformed from being the master of society into its servant. Yet given the spontaneity of the popular movement, the use of the army by the corrupt leadership could throw the Chinese people into the arms of forces espousing westernism and counterrevolution.

We all know that this is what has happened in Eastern Europe. The sad results can be seen in the elections in Poland. After forty years plus of socialism the Polish United Workers Party - the Communist Party in Poland - can only manage to get around 20% of the popular vote, while Solidarnosc - a counterrevolutionary organisation - gets 80%. The same basic problem of the alienation of the majority of the population exists throughout Eastern Europe. This is not because of some historic or congenital backwardness amongst Poles, Magyars, Serbs, Rumanians, Czechs etc. It is because of the crimes of the opportunists who have led those countries since the end of World War II.

Now that the leadership of People's China has turned the guns of the People's Army against the people, the legitimacy that the Communist Party of China has enjoyed ever since 1949 - in spite of all the petty bourgeois adventures and mistakes - has been lost and will never be regained by this leadership.

The danger of counterrevolutionary ideas gaining a hold cannot be underestimated. The democracy movement in China was a cross class movement. Sociologically it centred on students - who are the sons and daughters of workers and peasants, true, but also of the bureaucracy and China's new capitalist class. At the peak of the movement the students were not only joined by workers and peasants but bourgeois and bureaucrats. This is what

made the revolt we saw a people's movement rather than a class one - in this lies the possibility of counterrevolutionary elements gaining hegemony now that the government and party leadership has turned to the use of force to keep itself in power.

For Leninists, therefore, what is vital is the emergence of a proletarian leadership which gives the masses a conscious communist perspective. Naturally this would involve a fierce struggle against the Dengs and Li Pengs (who until a short time ago were the west's favourite communists in China). It would not, though, mean seeking allies among the forces of counterrevolution. Neither will Leninists try and escape their responsibilities by casting doubt on China's socialism, as does Eric Trevel, the dull general secretary of the right centrist New Communist Party, in his dull *New Worker*. Nor will Leninists "support" a "movement regardless of its political character" in China, as does the editor of the RCP's *the next step*.

Such cowardly anti-communism leads such elements to monstrously call what happened in 1949 a "counterrevolution" or to be soft on Chinese versions of counterrevolutionaries like Solidarnosc in Poland and the Mujahedin in Afghanistan. China's crisis exposes the fact that world wide bureaucratic socialism and 'official communism' is in a 1914 type crisis, which requires 1917 type solutions. Nonetheless, the Chinese revolution was a huge and precious gain for all workers. It must be defended unconditionally, even if it is led by opportunists such as Deng and Li Peng. Those who refuse to do this have no right to call themselves communists.

It is quite clear that bureaucratic socialism has created a chasm between those who formally rule and those who actually do. Such a position can never be in the long term interests of socialism. Socialist democracy is no luxury, it is a necessity. For socialism to advance along the road to communism the masses must be the rulers in more than name only. Without mass participation and socialist democracy, in the end the masses will become alienated. Bureaucratic socialism is to blame if this happens, not the masses. However much some bureaucrats might regret it, the people cannot be replaced.

Of course bureaucratic socialism is a double edged sword. It alienates the masses. It also corrupts those who, in their youth, lived the life of devoted revolutionaries. Many of those old men - and they are very old, aren't they - who ordered the army into Beijing on June 3 joined the communist movement in the early 1920s, participated in the Long March and saw many comrades and loved ones perish. They were prepared to give everything to the cause of the revolution, and did.

The leaders of the Chinese party and state were not placed in power courtesy of the Red Army. Nor were they from the Gorbachev mould. They were not yes men who climbed the bureaucratic career ladder. The Communist Party of China won power after many years of bitter struggle and heroic self sacrifice. The leaders of this party were revolutionaries, and whatever they are now doing to damage the revolution, we will not forget the past. Nevertheless these former revolutionaries now stand exposed as an isolated and frightened clique.

Proof of the political bankruptcy of the leadership in China was starkly illustrated at the height of the popular rebellion. While a million demonstrated in Tiananmen Square, Li Peng could only use helicopter gun ships to distribute leaflets (threatening the army clampdown which has now come). He did not have the courage to address the masses in person. His approach was that of the bureaucrat determined to hold onto privilege, not

that of the communist who made the revolution in 1949.

For us one of the key lessons of the May Rebellion in China was a reaffirmation that the masses make history. This does not appear to be the attitude of the 'official communists'. Take the 'official communists' in the Soviet Union. They now openly state that the class struggle is an evil and have a resulting contempt for the masses.

During the Deng/Gorbachev summit, Soviet commentators showed their contempt and fear of the masses. They refused to admit that the rebellion of the masses completely overshadowed the capitalist roaders' summit. As far as they were concerned history is made by so-called 'great' men like Deng and Gorbachev, not the masses in their millions. Yet, even without arms, once the masses moved Beijing was brought to a standstill and a deep split was created in the bureaucratic leadership of the Communist Party of China. Transparently the Gorbachevites fear a repetition of this in the USSR.

China has been pursuing its own version of perestroika for ten years now. Results have been significant: GNP has grown on average by 10% per annum. But there have also been negative effects.

Inflation has eroded wages and caused severe economic dislocation. Agriculture has become completely unbalanced. Grain production has now actually gone into decline because of the emphasis on individualism and market forces. In place of developing and maintaining the necessarily collective irrigation systems there has been a turn to individual cash crops.

Well placed peasants - those who live near the big cities and can lay their hands on enough money - practice market gardening and have done well. Those in remoter regions have been forced into wage slavery or have sought a living by leaving the countryside and heading for the cities. As a result of this and hasty anti-inflationary measures there now exists mass unemployment in China.

The turn to the market has produced a growing class differentiation. Far from seeking to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and the rural poor, the leaders of the Communist Party of China stand by the Bukharinite slogan: get rich. Yet the urban masses have seen little improvement in living standards since the early 1980s. It is the upper layer of corrupt party and government officials, well placed peasants and the new merchant and manufacturing class which has grown rich, very rich at that. These elements clearly have an interest in coming together and constituting themselves a capitalist ruling class.

With the alienation of the masses and the bloodshed in Tiananmen Square the proto capitalist ruling class could gain a mass pro-capitalist base in the same way Solidarnosc in Poland has. No genuine communist can afford to dismiss such a possibility, nor the lessons events in China have for all socialist countries - not least the Soviet Union, the world's revolutionary centre, upon which the survival of the entire world socialist system pivots.

The slaughter we have seen in Beijing could well be repeated in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev. Perestroika has got nothing to do with strengthening socialist democracy in the USSR. It is an anti-working class, anti-socialist programme which will strengthen the forces of capitalist restorationism. It is no different from Deng's Four Modernisations... except that it will only produce negative results. Where, because China is still extremely backward the market can still produce some positive results, in the USSR perestroika will have few redeeming features. China's bureaucratic socialism has not - at least economi-

cally speaking - run out of all possibilities. The same cannot be said of the USSR.

Gorbachev has nothing to boast about - a 4.5% 'growth rate' with an unofficial 5% inflation rate. The pre-crisis situation that existed under Bzheznev continues and is becoming more obvious, more profound and more dangerous. His measures will of course produce a proto capitalist class, but, for the vast majority, nothing except the threat of unemployment and rising prices.

For us any retreat to the market necessitates countermeasures which enable the working class to protect itself against its own state, which inevitably suffers a bureaucratisation under such conditions. We say the workers must be equipped with the most advanced weaponry so that the army could never be used against them, trade unions must be independent of the state and the political line of the Communist Party must be kept firmly for the working class through purging careerist elements.

There is none of this in Gorbachev's platform. His democracy is just like bourgeois democracy. It is a sham. A safety valve. Where the masses can choose who will misrepresent them every five years rather than moving towards direct administration of society. Gorbachev's perestroika cannot revitalise the Soviet economy, only genuine mass socialist democracy can do that.

Perestroika will not produce a doubling of GNP in ten years. A turn towards the market in the USSR will produce nothing but a larger version of the chaos that is Hungary, Yugoslavia and of course Poland where the 'left' wing of Solidarnosc is criticising the PUWP for its Thatcherite platform and its open admiration of Margaret Thatcher.

The PUWP proposes to emulate her methods in order to restructure the Polish economy. The 'left' wing of Solidarnosc is offering what they call the Swedish model as the alternative, a 'civilised and painless' way to modernise. In all honesty Poland is not a Sweden. Sweden is an advanced capitalist country, an imperialist power. Poland is comparatively backward. A turn towards capitalism in Poland - and that is what the PUWP and Solidarnosc are united on - will produce far more pain and suffering than anything we have witnessed in Britain.

Because of that we are confident that any return to capitalism - in any of the existing socialist states - will be short lived. Having ruthlessly criticised itself the revolution will return with renewed strength, renewed determination and renewed vision.

2. The situation in Britain

Comrades, we will now turn to our own country. There has been much editorialising in the 'quality' press warning of a return to the 'bad old times' of the 1970s. What has particularly concerned the ruling class has been the contradictory effects of the Tories' anti-trade union laws. It has cowed trade union officialdom; and, as witnessed by the 'leftist' Ron Todd, made all trade union tops into the lawyers' best friends, ready and willing to spend tens of thousands of pounds of their members' dues on appealing to the High Court with pleas to be allowed to sanction strike action. As to the rank and file, though, it has increasingly sought to circumvent injunction bound officialdom. "Tight laws regulating official strikes may be making wildcat action more common" noted the high Tory *Economist*.

So, after years of declaring working class militancy dead, the Thatcher government promises new legislation to curb wildcat strikes. After years of bashing the so-called trade union barons in the name of the ordi-

This article is an edited version of the speech given Summer Offensive at On the O

by comrade Jack Conrad at the launch of our Sixth
the beginning of June

ffensive

nary trade unionist, Thatcher wants to give the bureaucracy the powers to discipline and police the rank and file, and no wonder ...

All the evidence suggests that we are entering a new phase in the class struggle. Thatcher's luck seems to be running out. This has nothing to do with personalities. Thatcher vs Heath, Lawson vs Thatcher. There is an organic conundrum. Her party is deeply divided over the prospect of 1992. Thatcher fears that adopting the EC's costly social charter, joining the EMS and loosening the US special relationship - moves towards an integrated Western European imperialist bloc - would produce German domination, not a British renaissance. Other Tories fear that a maintenance of the status quo will only speed up Britain's relative decline. It is a devil and the deep blue sea situation.

On top of this there is a welling up of working class anger - the introduction of the Poll Tax to England and Wales can only add to that anger and help to generalise it.

During ten years in office Thatcher successfully managed to pick off one isolated section of the working class after another. Key sections like steelworkers, printers and seafarers all fell victim. All of those once powerful sections were set up and then duely knocked down. Of course, the section that everyone - not least the Tories - regarded as crucial was the miners.

The Tories used every device to ensure that the miners' Great Strike - which the government precipitated - remained isolated. With the help of trade union officialdom, trouble over the Docks Labour Scheme - which triggered two strikes in 1984 - and on the rails, was defused. As a result the miners were, whatever Arthur says, beaten and soundly beaten at that. The NUM has since been decimated through redundancies and the UDM split. It is now seeking a future through a merger with the TGWU. Those who refuse to admit that the miners were beaten show how removed they and their left reformist politics are from reality.

There is no doubt in my mind that the defeat of the miners cast a distinct, new realist, shadow over the entire working class movement. A green light was given to Labourism's project of creating a Thatcherite political platform. As to militancy, it stood discredited along with the strike weapon itself. If the miners couldn't win, how can we win, argued one group of workers after another.

This could not be a permanent state of affairs. Capitalism lives by increasing the rate of exploitation. The prospect of Britain post-1992 being opened up to the competition of French, Italian and above all Federal German competition is already leading to a new drive to rationalise and restructure. As day follows night this inevitably produces resistance from a class which has been bloodied over the last 10 years but has not suffered a strategic defeat.

But what we are seeing is not one dimensional. We must also take into account psychology. The strikes affecting the car industry, the post office, the hospitals, etc last year were very significant. Rank and file workers went way beyond what the trade union officials wanted. They had to fight official conservatism and betrayal all the way along the line. These strikes showed that the rank and file was beginning to shrug off the defeat of the miners. Confidence was reviving. Backs against the wall defensive struggles against job slashing employers began to give way to workers themselves going on to the offensive.

Naturally this pattern is uneven and full of contradictions. Nonetheless there can be no doubt that if we look at the situation today there are all the signs that the negative aspects

of the miners' defeat have now definitively been left behind.

For communists this is something we must wholeheartedly welcome. We know that socialism will never come via parliament or courtesy of some revolutionary sect. The working class will liberate itself through its own combativity. A revival of combativity - even around mundane day to day issues - leads to a questioning of the supposed god given right of our rulers to rule. Here is the primaevial dictatorship of the proletariat.

Strange then, as we have pointed out, that some, such as *Marxism Today's* Charlie Leadbeater and the RCP's Mike Freeman, have felt compelled to talk down the rise in militancy. We are not interested in the method which damns the Euros through their intellectual association with the RCP or vice versa. What we are interested in is the truth. The employers are, yes, trying to push through measures that will increase the rate of exploitation, ie so-called 'flexible working practices' in the docks, the electricity supply industry, on London's bus and underground system, on the rails, etc. This is, though, only half the story.

Overwhelmingly these workers are demanding compensation in the form of higher pay and or lower hours. Registered dockers are the exception which proves the rule, here. We say the character of the unfolding struggles is not at all as one sided as presented by Leadbeater and Freeman. The mood is not a backs against the wall stand in response to an employers' offensive. The confidence and militancy of the working class is on the rise: there is a growing willingness to take or threaten strike action.

Although the conservatism of the trade union bureaucracy has been strengthened by five years of Labour's social contract and Thatcher's ten years of union bashing, at a rank and file level things point to a growing confidence and determination to fight.

The reasons for this are varied.

1. As we have said, the string of defeats over the last ten years have been defeats of isolated sections. This picking off one section after another suited the Tories but limited the impact of defeat and meant that our class has not suffered a defeat of a strategic nature.

2. In the midst of its over all pre-general crisis stagnation the last few years have seen the British economy experience an upward oscillation. In spite of the two million officially unemployed, a shortage of labour has developed. This is entirely the fault of the Tories and their capitalist system. The 'training schemes' have had nothing to do with training. They were designed to massage down unemployment statistics and as a means of social control. The unemployed were intimidated and kept off the streets but not trained. Hence in certain areas - notably in South East England - there is increasing competition for labour and therefore the possibility of workers gaining concessions through militant action (the fact that a lot of the present militant action is concentrated in the South East rather dents the myth of the soft south). 3. Boasts about conquering inflation have proved hollow. In May the government admitted that the inflation rate had reached 8% and was set to continue upwards. Lawson has attempted to hold back inflation with savage increases in interest rates. For all workers, inflation has eroded living standards. For new members of what Thatcher calls the property owning democracy, ie the middle and upper sections of the working class, interest rate rises have meant at a stroke that they find themselves £10 or £20 out of pocket every week.

These are the main factors which lie behind the very real upturn in the class struggle we

see today.

So what should militants do? Militants must not only push for strike action now, when so many other sections are engaged in or are threatening to take strike action. They must also develop their own organisational structures which can circumvent the dead hand of official trade unionism. As an aside here it is interesting to note that *Socialist Worker* calls for this in its May 13 edition, yet, as readers of *The Leninist* will be only too aware, the SWP does not practice what it preaches. For example, SWP members involved in the health disputes last year were the most vocal opponents of creating a national health workers' rank and file movement. The SWP has become a deeply conservative propagandist sect ... and a hypocritical one to boot.

Anyway, unless rank and file organisation is built, defeat ultimately threatens. For all their talk, trade union tops are more concerned with protecting union funds, buildings, chauffeur driven cars and fat expense accounts from the attentions of the courts and the sequestrators than pursuing the class struggle.

Because of this it is also essential to support political demands which can provide an alternative to the new realism of the trade union bureaucracy and at the same time help to overcome sectionalism and rally the working class as a whole against the bosses as a class.

This will lead to a head on confrontation with the law. The rank and file organisation on the London underground has sought to avoid this by trying to ensure the anonymity of its leaders. This is inventive and admirable. Nonetheless a clash with the law cannot be avoided. Sooner rather than later the courts will be called in to crush rank and file organisation and rank and file leaders. When this happens it is absolutely essential that militants have a clearly worked out plan.

The 'official communists' who control what limps on as the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions are advocating a campaign for the TUC to call a day of action. Frankly the working class has had enough of such Grand Old Duke of York actions. We argue for what is needed. Not the token some hope the TUC might deliver. That is why we have pointed to the lessons of 1972.

In the July of that year the courts ordered the imprisonment of five rank and file dock workers, Cornelius Clancy, Anthony Merrick, Bernie Steer, Vic Turner and Derek Watkins. Militant dockers and their supporters spurned the pleas for moderation emanating from the TUC and the Labour Party. Instead they called for active solidarity.

Across the country tens and hundreds of thousands of engineers, car workers, builders, miners and other workers heeded their call. By July 26 there was what amounted to an unofficial general strike.

Faced with this tremendous pressure from below, concerned lest it got completely out of control, the TUC General Council voted for a one day general strike for July 28. It did not happen. It did not need to. The Tory government called in the Official Solicitor who speedily secured the release of those who had universally come to be known as the Pentonville 5.

The lessons of 1972 must be taken to heart and creatively applied to the conditions of today. Crucially, the demand must be raised to smash the Tories' anti-trade union laws through generalised strike action. That is what we should be campaigning for. In this way the sectional struggles over pay and conditions will have a common focus and the potential to combine into a workers' united offensive.

We can expect no help from the official labour movement. Quite the opposite in fact. The TUC, Kinnoek and the Labour Party are

still in headlong flight to the right. All Kinnoek says he wants to do is to run capitalism better than the Tories. To achieve this he will do everything he can to undermine working class struggles. Already he has rapped Michael Meacher's knuckles for having dared to suggest that a Labour government would repeal the anti-trade union laws.

For communists this creates something of a window of opportunity. Labour is moving to the right, the workers are moving into action - and therefore eventually to the left. A new generation of class fighters is being created. It needs to be won to the ideas of Marxism if we are really going to take on and defeat the bosses and their system. To do that, social democracy - left as well as right - must be defeated. This cannot be done by merging with it as Trotskyites and 'official communists' have done, nor by wishing it away, as does the RCP. What is needed is a genuine Communist Party which is able to combine principle with mass work. That is what *The Leninist* is dedicated to achieve.

3. The Leninist and the Sixth Summer Offensive

Before briefly talking about *The Leninist* itself and its Sixth Summer Offensive, it is worth even more briefly touching upon the 'official communist' movement in Britain today. It is clear that disintegration is far advanced.

The Euros are losing members hand over fist. Politically they are in complete disarray. Their 1987 national congress voted to instruct its new executive committee to draw up a new draft of its programme the *British Road to Socialism*. This has proved politically impossible.

Instead they have managed to cobble together what they call an intermediate strategy which advocates a pre-1945 type electoral alliance between Labour and the Liberal Democrats and seeks to modernise imperialist Britain. These people have no right to call themselves communists, nor for that matter a party. Such neo-Fabian rubbish as their *Manifesto for the future* inevitably places a question mark over the pretence of being anything other than a think tank for the bourgeoisie. Indeed, leading *Marxism Today* supporter Bear Campbell openly suggests that the Euro CPGB is becoming untenable and that the Euros need to look for a future in a 'broad socialist movement'. The writing is on the wall for them, as it is for the stillborn CPB and the equally disorientated NCP.

What of *The Leninist*? In 1988 we set the aim of doubling the number of members in 1989 and organising them all into cells. Comrades, this has been done and more. We also said we must prepare to spread our organisation outside our London base area in 1990. Comrades, I am pleased to announce that moves are already afoot here.

There can be no question that our organisation is still small in numbers and inexperienced politically and organisationally. Nonetheless we are beginning to show what we can do. Not only with our paper but also with campaigns like the Unemployed Workers Charter, Hands off Ireland! and our sponsoring of the Workers Theatre Movement.

The Summer Offensive has been central to all these developments. It is not only about giving us the financial resources to carry out our plans. It is centrally about creating the human resources we need in the form of communist cadres. The Summer Offensive makes communists. It purges backward ideas and backward people. Frankly, if communists can't raise themselves to the task of raising money they are unlikely to be much use on the barricades of the revolution.

Our Sixth Summer Offensive is by far the most ambitious yet. We are setting our sights to double what we raised last year in our Fifth. Yes we are ambitious. This year we haven't just totted up totals but set a very high target, £20,000 in fact. Meeting this will stretch everyone and, in the process, steel us all.

Victory in the Summer Offensive will be a qualitative step forward in our struggle. It will put our organisation on a new, higher footing. It points the way towards the reformed Communist Party.

I am absolutely confident that we will see the Sixth Summer Offensive to victory. As confident as I am that we will reforge our CPGB and see the victory of socialism in Britain.

• I salute all participants in The Leninist's Sixth Summer Offensive!
• Long live *The Leninist*!
• Long live communism!



SUMMER OFFENSIVE

Brilliant start

Looking for a fight, Jack? Then look no further than the pugnacious lads and lasses of the SWP – unless you're a member of a fascist organisation of some sort, of course. A recent internal circular from the leadership of this large sect instructs the membership not to go after boneheads and other Hitler worshippers – to turn the other cheek, we presume. On the other hand, SWPers in various areas are increasingly resorting to threats of physical violence against Leninist and other left paper sellers, simply because we happen to be on the same patch as them (and invariably sell more). We ask the SWP rank and file: really, don't you think you've got your priorities wrong?

After he was appointed (part time) general secretary of the CPB last year, Mike Hicks detailed eight points by which to assess the success of the new party. 1. A membership of more than 3,000; 2. a theoretical journal (does *Communist Review* count?); 3. increased sales of the *Morning Star*; 4. a district committee in every district; 5. an education programme; 6. a thriving YCL; 7. a growth of workplace branches; 8. a new cadre of communist trade unionists. On all points it is quite clear that the CPB has been an abject failure. At least according to its own general secretary!

There was an announcement of a death in the Sunday Times. Martin Jacques, editor of *Marxism Today* told readers that 'Eurocommunism' is no more. You can imagine how cut up we were about this. We have always insisted on the nonexistence of the Euros' 'communism'. It was never alive to die. Martin makes clear however, that his recognition of the abysmal failure of the 'Eurocommunist experiment' internationally has not led him or his ilk to consider revolutionary politics, for he comes to bury communism, not to praise it. Communism, apparently, 'has lost forever its distinctive and separate identity...' Readers will not have to be political geniuses to guess the implications of that for the Euro CPGB itself.

Jostling for position has already started in the rush to fill the shoes of Gordon McLennan when he finally retires from CPGB general secretaryship after November. Nina Temple, Ian McKay, Lou Lewis, Martin Jacques and Dave Green are all in the running. Whoever draws the short straw gets the job.



Leninist theory into revolutionary practice

Comrades who are serious about turning revolutionary talk into revolutionary action must face up to the task of ensuring the success of our £20,000 Sixth Summer Offensive

THIS year's Summer Offensive, the annual fund raising drive of *The Leninist* organisation, got off to a brilliant start at the launch meeting in Central London on Sunday, June 4. Following the political opening by comrade Jack Conrad (see centre pages of this issue) three members of the Workers Theatre Movement performed a short sketch which outlined the arguments for and aims of the Sixth Summer Offensive.

The assembled comrades rose to the challenge. Over £14,000 was pledged then and there towards our £20,000-in-two-months target. With more pledges still to come in and the promise from many comrades that they will bust through their individual targets, it looks as if our ambitious £20,000 goal is set to be achieved!

An adaption introduced to this year's Offensive proved successful in drawing wider circles of sympathisers and supporters into participation in the campaign. There is no minimum target for non-members. By getting comrades around the organisation to 'dip their toe' into the Offensive this year with a target somewhat less than the minimum from previous years, we are aiming to get these comrades to show themselves in practice that the targets we set are not impossible to achieve; that for a communist raising relatively huge amounts of money should be second nature.

True, we have created two

'classes'. Those members organised in cells are given ambitious minimums to raise, and comrades around our organisation have been allowed to set their own minimum target. Yet interestingly most of our non-members matched the minimum target set for members. This proves again what we Leninists have always said. If you put forward serious politics and serious tasks workers will respect you and raise themselves to the general level that exists.

The Summer Offensive is hard, that is true. £20,000 was the target set by the 1,500 strong CPB last year! For an organisation which is still in comparative terms tiny, £20,000 is a Mount Everest! But for communists and for those comrades who want to become genuine communists, £20,000 is necessary, and because it is necessary, it is possible.

Such an approach is, of course, totally alien to the inhabitants of the swamp. The vast majority of the British left, squelching around organisationally and politically in the orbit of the Labour Party, cannot conceive of fighting for what is necessary, but only for what is possible.

This approach, given the powerful influence of bourgeois politics in this society, necessarily sets itself parameters within the existing order of things. People and organisations who start from this 'possibilist' platform inevitably constitute themselves as a strand within bourgeois politics, even if

on the extreme left of it.

Take the Socialist Workers Party, for example. This is a 'party' of some 3,000 members. If we extrapolate from the level of financial commitment that our members are currently making to the Summer Offensive, then when we are the size of the SWP, we will be raising over a million pounds plus in two months!

The paltry amounts that SWP branches raised for their last fund drive -£50,000 target – testifies not simply to the organisation's low horizons and consequent softness. It underlines the fact that this large sect cannot break from the parameters of being the extreme left of bourgeois politics.

Perhaps some readers would protest that we make too much of our Summer Offensive. Untrue. In fact, it is very difficult for us to 'over-do' the importance of our annual fund raising Offensive for the theory and practice of Leninism.

We are fighting to build a genuine Communist Party in this country that can take on and beat the bourgeois state, which has £billion at its disposal and millions of armed men, agents and servants. This Party has to be fought for now. A Communist Party as a revolutionary form of consciousness of the proletariat is a process by its very nature. It comes into being as a product of struggle, from battles in the here and now.

And of course, we can never be fully prepared for the battles that

the class struggle poses to us. Nevertheless, that Communist Party must be fought for, every single agonising step of the way, fought for with the comrades and resources we have available to us in the here and now, not when the barricades have been built.

Communists are not born, they are made. Likewise the reformed Communist Party. It will not emerge fully armed, like Athena from the head of Zeus, just in time to lead the revolution. It will be made through what we do now, not least through ensuring the success of our annual Summer Offensive.

Why is this? Because, as everyone knows, money matters. Under capitalism people spend half of their lives trying to get enough in order to live; people steal it, people even kill for it. Real revolutionary organisations have to operate within capitalism if they are to destroy it. There can be no opting out of society. Money is necessary if we are going to print and distribute our propaganda, if we are going to turn words into action.

Understanding this, real communists organise in a way that produces what is necessary in terms of financial resources. Such practice is not an optional extra for Leninists. It flows directly from our materialist theory and is organically linked to it.

Those comrades who say they agree with everything we say, but shy away from committing themselves totally to our organisation and its calls for high levels of money raising, are caught on the horns of a contradiction. Leninism is not simply a system of ideas: it is a guide to practice – to ideas in action. If comrades cannot dedicate themselves to the practice that flows from our ideas, then their real problem is that they do not agree with/understand our ideas.

And the practice we demand is hard practice, not because we are out to ruin people's social lives or alienate their spouses. We take such an approach because of our understanding of the tasks posed to us, an understanding which flows from our ideology. It is infinitely harder to overthrow capitalism than it is to defend it. In the same way it is easier to imagine the Labour Party will introduce socialism, or that workers will come to socialist consciousness spontaneously. Such bourgeois illusions among socialists are common and naturally lead to lazy and eventually reactionary practice.

Our task is to build a Party capable of leading the British revolution. It is as simple and difficult as that. Anyone who is not serious about socialism, or believes that the Labour Party can do it for us, should opt for the easy life in the SWP, the CPB or the myriad other sects that do a disservice to the name 'communism'. Those comrades who are serious about turning revolutionary talk into revolutionary action must face up to the task of ensuring the success of *The Leninist's* Sixth Offensive – the campaign where we build our sinews of war.

Ian Mahoney

Workers' theatre

Workers Theatre Movement, Dockers '89, contact for performances and/or affiliation at: BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX (01-431 3135)

WE HAVE seen the Tories take on and defeat one section of our class after another. As has been pointed out by *The Leninist* for many years, they have been preparing to do battle with the dockers; nothing — the Tories hope — has been overlooked. The dockers must be crushed. Why? They are a strategically important section of the working class. They have a militant record of struggle second to none. They are members of the country's largest union, the TGWU.

Tragically the dockers have not yet developed a strategy to stand up to the Tories, let alone beat them. The shop stewards rank and file wildcat strike petered out. Todd succeeded in railroadng the whole dispute into the law courts. After defeat in the High Court he won in the House of Lords, true. But this proved to be a pyrrhic victory. A new ballot has to be held. And the danger is that a strike, which takes place after the abolition of the Docks Labour Scheme has been given royal consent, could lead to former registered dockers being given the sack en masse, Wapping style. All of this is the subject of the Workers Theatre Movement's sketch *Dockers '89*.

The agitprop presentation of the WTM is austere, some would say basic. Yet *Dockers '89* is bitingly effective and has a fearless eye for complexity. Through an elegant economy and daring cuts and compositions it exposes the class reality behind the Tories attacks on the dockers, the spinelessness of the T&G bureaucracy and the media hate campaign. The WTM is concerned with giving life to ideas, not providing entertainment. This means that there are no Meryl Streep type 'stars' getting into the 'skin' of someone else, or holding up "as t'were the mirror up to nature" (Shakespeare). Instead we have dialectical argument aimed at changing reality. The production techniques and acting serve as a means to penetrate the surface reality of events, to X-ray the motives, interests and aims of individuals, institutions and classes and show what needs to be done by militant workers.

In doing this the WTM draws on the tradition of the revolutionary 1920s and early 1930s. The tradition of Eisenstein, Meyerhold and the Blue Blouses in the USSR; Brecht, Eisler and the Arbeiter-theaterbund in Germany; and, of course, Ewan MacColl, Tom Thomas and the original WTM in Britain. As the WTM proves, far from being outdated, cumbersome or simply passe, agitprop methods speak for our day. The class struggle, like capitalism and its ideology of lies, continues. Hence the working class must fight ... and fight using all methods at its disposal. Agitprop is a powerful ideological weapon.

The WTM is well aware of, and obviously greatly respects, the tradition it seeks to build upon. To begin with it concentrated on learning and then performing the scripts of the original WTM; for example *Their theatre and ours*, *Three frames and two pictures* and *Meruut*. In this way the WTM has tried to take on board what is in fact the hidden subtle and powerful

rhythms and methods behind the seeming primitive simplicity of agitprop.

Having learnt from the past, and only after having learnt from the past, has the WTM felt confident, indeed ready, to use its own scripts. The first stage in this has rightly been cautious and took the form of adaptation. *May Day 1932* became *May Day 1989*.

As an aside here it is interesting and instructive to note that while some of the softer elements we have worked with on the old pieces, like *May Day 1932*, had no problem with attacks on Ramsay MacDonald and Karl Kautsky or praise of the Bolsheviks, attacks on Neil Kinnock, Gorbachev and praise of Leninist hards in the new *May Day 1989* have provoked heated debate. This is natural and good ... so long as the progressive forces win, that is.

With *May Day 1989* under its belt the WTM turned to putting *Dockers '89* into its repertoire. The aim is to tour it in order to raise solidarity and financial aid for rank and file dockers. The WTM has come of age.

Dockers '89 was written in response to the WTM's call for original scripts which squarely face up to the issues of the day and which bring out the realities behind class society. *Dockers '89* is original, yes, but no different in its political DNA from the 1920s and '30s. It is hard hitting and uncompromising. The piece was discussed fully by WTM comrades. Some thought that certain words and concepts were too "sophisticated" for a working class audience. It was also argued that perhaps the dockers were not the ideal subject for solidarity — after all they are unpopular and compared with most other workers very, very, well paid.

There were those who resisted this, those — like myself — who insisted that it would be fatal to talk down to workers, that we had a duty to defend the dockers, that their wages had been won through long and bitter struggle, and that all workers should be getting at least £400pw.

We won. And frankly, we were dead right. We got a "lump in the throat" response from dockers' shop stewards who saw the piece performed. Not surprisingly, they understood the sketch. More, they actually used the same 'sophisticated' words when addressing a UWC meeting in Central London. And more importantly, they intellectually empathised with our revolutionary arguments and communist solutions. The clinch, though, has surely been in the applause of working class audiences — low paid and unemployed. Here is our proof positive.

So the experience of using a new text raised problems of an overtly political nature. It has also posed profound technical problems. The class realities of 1932 and 1989 might not be fundamentally different. However the traffic and background noise of city streets is another matter. Where the unaided voice might have been able to cope 50 years ago it is hopeless now.

How to go forward? Should the sketches be cut to the bone? Should argument be dropped in favour of mime? Abandon outdoor work for the soft life of the bought off quango and the 'community' stage? No, all that would be mistaken. Shortening sketches does not make them any more audible. For the WTM ideas are the key. So is getting them over where the militant working class is ... and that is on the lobby, the picket line and the mass demonstration, ie in the noisy outdoors.

One answer is the use of megaphones. Naturally this would mean

developing all sorts of new acting and vocal techniques. It would have drawbacks. But it would have the overwhelming advantage that the ideas of the WTM would be heard, and heard loud and clear. And that matters above anything else. Indeed such a course opens up all sorts of new possibilities.

Massed megaphones might hinder gesture. On the other hand they could be used like the factory whistle symphonies developed by Mayakovsky in Soviet Russia ... and it is worth noting that the most prestigious agitprop group in Germany in the 1920s used megaphones ... and Ewan MacColl's group in Manchester, inspired by the German example, took their name ... the Red Megaphones.

... Clearly the past still has much to teach today's WTM.

Russell Medici
(a WTM member)

Polish nightmare

Janina Bauman, *A Dream of Belonging: My Years in Postwar Poland*, Virago Press, London 1988, pp202, £4.95

THE ELECTORAL thrashing just given to the Polish United Workers Party by the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc surely demonstrates, even to the most bone headed 'official communist', that the restoration of capitalism in Poland is now firmly on the agenda. So discredited is the PUWP among the masses that, when faced with unopposed Solidarnosc-approved PUWP "reformers" on the National List, voters simply crossed their names off, producing an instant crisis of the new constitution.

A letter from a Warsaw comrade in *The Leninist* No 78 bore witness to the PUWP's complete alienation from Polish youth, who "totally disbelieve the false promises". This was confirmed for me a few days ago when a young Pole newly arrived in Britain served me at my local greengrocers. Seeing my Lenin badge he gave me a kindly but pitying smile. "Are you a member of the Communist Party? Of course, communism is impossible in practice. You should go and see for yourself!"

Janina Bauman's honest story of her experiences as a Polish Jew throws much light on the bureaucratic methods by which the name of communism has been brought into such ill repute, the more so since it comes not from a 'dissident' source but from one who spent 16 years in membership of the Party (1952-1968) and attained a high position in the Script Bureau of the Polish film industry, exercising considerable influence over the selection and content of films.

In the early years after World War II, anti-semitism, far from being routed with the Nazis, lingered on in socialist Poland. Thus, to her disgust, her boyfriend from the ghetto days found it necessary to conceal his Jewishness. "He kept his false name which had helped him to survive the occupation and was reluctant to introduce me to his new friends in case they might guess his secret." The Kielce pogrom of July 4 1946 in which "42 Jewish holocaust survivors were killed by their Polish neighbours" (p21) pushed her towards the Zionist movement and strengthened her aspiration to seek a new life in Palestine.

Most of the Party members she came to know were "just after an

easy career", and this mistrust was confirmed when, in the January 1947 elections to the first *Sejm* (parliament), the communist director of the children's home she worked in took a lorry load of older pupils to vote, although most of them were under the required age of 18. She knew that she herself was registered to vote in Warsaw and not locally, but the poll clerk ticked off a man's name on the list of voters. She was given a ballot paper in an unsealed envelope which, if popped unmarked into the nearby ballot box, gave a vote to the democratic block candidates.

"To vote for the PSL [Polish Peasant Party], the opposition, I would have to go to the booth and delete the top names. I had little time to reflect, however, since my boss, with his arm round my shoulders, was pushing me to the ballot box. Before I could open my mouth to say, 'I won't be a minute!' my envelope with the list of candidates intact slipped into the slit and disappeared." She would have voted against the reactionary PSL of her own free will, but "I was forced to take part in a swindle and for this reason I also hated those who promoted the fraud: the Party." (p27)

Nevertheless, as a student, in the autumn of 1947 she "had to study Marx and Engels in depth" and "found it deeply convincing" but was only converted from Zionism to communist ideas by the keen young (Jewish) army captain who became her lifelong partner — the first "honest communist" she felt she could trust. Later, after doing exemplary work for the ZMP socialist youth organisation by running a workplace wall newspaper, putting life into the current Party slogan — "Criticism and self-criticism are oxygen to the lungs of the Party" — she was taken into Party membership.

Holding a Party card, however, far from requiring financial self sacrifice, was an aid to promotion, if not a precondition; likewise, losing your membership usually meant demotion and financial loss. No wonder the Party was full of careerists!

Party meetings, though crowded, she describes as "long hours of dreadful boredom ... The problems discussed were usually very trivial. Most of the members were departmental directors and managers and carried on long and heated arguments on issues thought up mainly to sustain their own prestige ... Some caretakers and canteen attendants would fall asleep immediately the meeting began, only waking up at the end when the assembly burst into the *Internationale*." (p102) The Party's Central Committee plenum in November 1949 had set the policy

of "inquiry into the past of all men in responsible positions, for a purge of unreliable elements ... Family ties with someone who had once offended the Party or lived in the West were often enough to disqualify a man from holding a responsible position." (p71)

It is easy to see how such a policy pushes people back towards their reactionary relatives, tarring them with the same brush, or ties people to the mistakes of their past, blocking the process of winning them over to the communist cause. It also blurred the distinction between Zionists, who adhere to its reactionary separatism, and Jews as a whole. Indeed when the bureaucracy needed to find a scapegoat to blame for society's ills, it sometimes played on the residue of anti-semitic prejudice, usually under the cover of anti-Zionism.

Stalin's arrest of a group of mainly Jewish Kremlin doctors in December 1952 on a charge of murdering Politburo members "was a signal for an antisemitic purge which swept the Soviet Union". (p105) A month later the author's husband, a keen communist and anti-Zionist, was instantly dismissed from the Polish army (where he was by then a major) because his father had been visiting the Israeli embassy to enquire about emigration. Paradoxically, "the collapse of the Stalin cult [in Poland] brought a great resentment against any Jews who had held top posts in the Party and public security." (p130)

By 1967 Janina Bauman was at the top of the Script Bureau and her husband was a highly successful professor in Warsaw university, earning good money as a writer. On new year's eve after the 1967 Arab Israeli war, Polish television "breathed out sheer hatred", showing a hook-nosed puppet of general Dayan being helped by small hook-nosed figures scattered around the globe while Dayan thanked his "brothers-in-law from all countries in the world" for their help and support. That was the last straw, and she and her husband handed in their Party cards the next day. In the anti-semitic purge which developed in early 1968 both lost their jobs and were in effect hounded out of the country.

Such chauvinistic campaigns have been repeated in more than one socialist country since then, the expulsion of Bulgarian Turks from their homeland being only the latest example. Such filthy reactionary actions discredit and weaken socialism. They point to the fact that 'official communism' is morally and politically bankrupt. It must go, and through the political determination of revolutionary proletarians it will go.

Ian Farrell

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Against all immigration laws

IN MAY the Home Office estimated that 1,500 migrants entered Britain from Turkey seeking refugee status. Kurdish and Alevi people – one group a persecuted national minority and the other a religious minority – have flooded from their homeland to escape the repression of the Ozal regime. The Turkish state denies the very right of the Kurdish people to exist, let alone to self determination. It outlaws the Kurdish language and refers to them as "mountain Turks". The Alevis suffer persecution for their beliefs from the Turkish Sunni Moslem majority. Many have left to escape such state bigotry. But, in escaping to Britain, they have only found more of the same.

To prevent entry the Home Office instituted visas for would be refugees on June 23. This is nothing new. Tamils fleeing the repression of the Sri Lankan regime found themselves confronted by the same impassable wall of British red tape. Refugees are only welcome in Britain when they are rich Chinese from Hong Kong or good for some chauvinist propaganda. But even here, as soon as the propaganda value declines, the curtain comes down. Look at the situation of the Vietnamese 'boat people' for an example of once popular 'victims of red terror' losing their popularity with imperialism.

Because Turkey is a 'freedom loving' Nato ally of Britain the oppressed Kurdish and Alevi peoples received no 'hospitality' from the British state, even before the institution of visas. The *Guardian* of June 9 estimates that at least 74 Kurds and Alevis are imprisoned in British jails and detention centres. Though not charged with any offence whatsoever, these refugees are held against their will in British cages in abominable conditions. Many would be homeless, and therefore not eligible to enter Britain, were it not for the intervention of the Turkish and Kurdish community here through the medium of the Kurdish Refugees Support Group.

A statement from refugees in Winchester prison describes the treatment meted out to political emigres: "After a long journey we arrived at Winchester prison where we were taken to a waiting room, accompanied by police and police dogs ... we realised that this was a prison for criminals. Since we knew that we had committed no crime we resisted being taken inside."

Some, however, were already inside. The new arrivals demanded to see them. When they did it became completely apparent that they were prisoners: "When our friends came out we saw that they were dressed in prison uniform. They told us that this was a closed prison for common criminals. We therefore continued to refuse to go inside. After an hour 40-50 riot police came suddenly into the waiting room. Three policemen grabbed each of us, pinioned our arms behind our backs and drag-

ged us by the hair into our cells. Inside we were anxious to hear our friends screaming." (from a Union of Turkish Workers press release, June 2 1989).

The refugees are only let out of their cells for 20 minutes at meal times, when they are expected to go to the toilet as well. They are deprived of leisure activities such as exercise or even reading. There has been no medical treatment for the prisoners, some of whom have undergone torture in Turkey, other than aspirin. All this, despite that fact that not one person is charged with anything. Welcome to Britain.

The Kurds and Alevis have responded by initiating a hunger strike in Harmondsworth detention centre and Winchester prison. Having resisted oppression in their own country, they will not bow down to it in Britain.

The harassment of immigrants, from interrogation, through virginity tests, has now gone as far as their criminalisation.

In response to this on June 18, more than 400 refugees from Turkey staged a march through central London in support of the hunger strikers. It is a damning indictment of the state of the British workers movement that such a fight should be left to migrant workers alone.

The only consistent working class position on this question is to fight against *all* immigration controls. This is a fundamentally different approach to that of the social democrats, expressed in such papers as the left Labour *Tribune*, *Euro 7 Days* and the CPB's *Morning Star*. All these, and more, call for 'non-racist' or 'democratic' immigration controls.

This is nothing more than a capitulation to the racist sentiment prevalent within the British working class. In fact, it is an articulation of the national chauvinist interests of the labour bureaucracy. It has nothing to do with the interests of the working class in Britain or internationally. More, it is a block to the achievement of those interests.

National chauvinism has bedevilled the international working class for over a century. In the Second International, things came to a head, in a struggle between the nationalist and internationalist trends, at the International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart, 1907.

Lenin saw this as being of vital importance, stating that "on the question of emigration and immigration, a clear difference of opinion arose between the opportunists and the revolutionaries in the Commission of the Stuttgart Congress. The opportunists cherished the idea of limiting the right of migration of backward, undeveloped workers - especially the Japanese and the Chinese. In the minds of these opportunists the spirit of narrow craft isolation, of trade union exclusiveness, outweighed the consciousness of socialist tasks" (CW, Vol 13, p89).

Later, in the struggle to establish

a new, revolutionary International, Lenin was to emphasise the importance of this break. In a letter to US socialists, Lenin compared it to the chauvinist line of the Socialist Party of America, concluding: "one cannot be an internationalist and be at the same time in favour of such [immigration] restrictions. And we assert that Socialists in America, especially English Socialists, belonging to the ruling and oppressing nation, who are not against any restrictions on immigration, against the possession of colonies ... and for the entire freedom of colonies, that such Socialists are in reality jingoes." (CW, Vol 21, p428).

Those who stood for limited immigration in 1907 stood openly with their own bourgeoisies when war broke out in 1914. The core of the internationalists, who opposed *all* immigration controls, went on to fight to turn the imperialist war into civil war and establish the Communist International.

Self styled 'communists' and 'socialists' who today espouse the doctrine of 'democratic' immigration controls are no different from the social chauvinist 'defenders of the fatherland' whom Lenin vigorously attacked. What they are arguing for is a democratic and non-racist imperialism – a reactionary utopia.

Opposition to all immigration controls is the only way to fight the racist British state on this issue. Our task is not to try and balance the ledgers of British imperialism. Left apologists for this line, for instance the SWP, have in the past tried to oppose immigration controls on the basis that immigration was actually good for the economy.

In the late '70s it joined forces with pop stars, Labourite MPs and football club managers in the Anti-Nazi League all class alliance, arguing that the National Front's line of 'one million immigrants, one million unemployed' was *technically* wrong, as immigration was declining.

That is not our concern. It is not a question of statistics. After all, would they have joined forces with the NF had immigration risen? It would certainly have demolished their feeble arguments. This is not a question of numbers. It is not a technical question at all, but a political one.

Capitalism is responsible for the deprivation of workers in Britain. To in any way give credence to the lie that such deprivation has anything whatsoever to do with the numbers of migrant workers entering the country -themselves more often than not the victims of British imperialist plunder -is to play into the hands of reaction and, ultimately, racism.

The approach of the SWP regarding the Kurdish and Alevi refugees is no different from its stand during the ANL period. "They're welcome here" is its main slogan. Brimming over with humanitarian warmth this may be, but it hardly confronts the issues raised by any struggle against the racism of the

British state. Liberal good intent is no substitute for an independent working class approach.

The SWP combines this liberalism with another aspect of class collaborationism, that of playing the role of shield bearers to one section of the bourgeoisie against another. In this case it backs Labourism.

In a letter in the *Hackney Gazette* of June 8, two members of the local SWP, which is involved in the campaign, state that "Tory immigration controls and refugee policy are racist" and that the "local Labour council should back the Kurds 100%". Independent working class action, it seems, is reduced to saying what the council should do. But there is an important half truth here.

Of course *Tory* immigration controls are racist. What, though, of *Labour* controls? In general the Tories are using an armoury provided for them by previous Labour governments.

Its White paper on Immigration of 1965 banned the entry of migrant unskilled workers and the Home Secretary was empowered to deport immigrants without going through the courts. In 1968 a Labour government passed the Commonwealth Immigration Act,

restricting entry to Britain to those with one grandparent or more already resident in Britain. In 1977 Labour brought in a probationary period of twelve months for the marriages of immigrant husbands. Labour administrations, just like their Tory counterparts, have carried out racist harassment of black communities, through immigration raids, police violence and more.

Labour, in office and opposition, is as guilty of racism as the Tories. It is the system which produces this racism, not some malevolent Tory vulture in Downing Street. We must fight for the abolition of all immigration controls and for the right to work for all workers.

The Unemployed Workers Charter put this forward on the June 15 demo against Employment Training, when it was joined by a contingent from the Union of Turkish Workers, with Kurdish and Alevi refugees behind its banners. We demanded "the right to work, the right to stay" for all workers, whatever their nationality. Such action expresses the fighting unity of all workers – the sort of fighting unity we need to win.

Sean Quinn

Bulgarian Turks

VER THE past month around 50,000 members of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria have crossed the border into Turkey. The tens of thousands that have crossed, and are still crossing, the border have been denied the right to take any more than what they can cram into the backs of Ladas, bikes or even just hand luggage. It has been reported that many have been denied the right to withdraw their savings from banks. Many are fleeing 'voluntarily', many have been forced out.

Turkey, of course, is milking this issue dry. Ozal's regime is using it to whip up an anti-Bulgarian campaign nationally and internationally, even to the extent of claiming that Bulgaria has been injecting emigrant children with virulent diseases. Many of the immigrants have been settled in the south east of the state – that is, Kurdistan – in a blatant attempt to undermine the struggle of the Kurdish people. Revealingly, the left of centre Turkish magazine *Towards 2000* was banned when it compared the treatment of Turks by Bulgaria to that of Kurds by Turkey.

We can have no sympathy with the crocodile tears of the Turkish regime, or the righteous indignation of its US and British backers. Yet neither can there be any justification for the chauvinism of the Bulgarian state and communist party. Since 1984 the Turkish language has been effectively banned there. The Bulga-

rian state refers to the Turkish minority as "Bulgarian moslems". By repressing their nationality these 'communists' are actually forcing the Turkish minority into the bigotry of Islam as a refuge from oppression. Religion is the opium of the people, and the Bulgarian state has the monopoly on dealing. The state defends this inexcusable position by claiming that its minority is not made up of *real* Turks, but Bulgarians who were forcibly converted to Islam in the 14 and 15 centuries! Even the Ottoman massacres in the Balkans during this period have been dredged up by the authorities.

The 'official communists' in Britain have ambitions and views which stretch no further than to continue whoring for the bureaucracies of the socialist countries. The *Morning Star* of June 19 quotes extensively from the Bulgarian PM, while referring to the Turkish minority all the while as "Moslem Bulgarians", as does the *New Worker* of June 9 in an article entitled "Turkish propaganda campaign targets Bulgaria's moslems". Their search for a quick, unprincipled buck has led them both to outright racism.

The chauvinism of the Bulgarian regime shows the crisis and degeneration of 'official communism' and bureaucratic socialism. To defend and extend the gains of our class, it is vital that such forces are overcome by genuinely proletarian internationalist forces.

HANDS OFF IRELAND!

Number 1: 20p (waged), 10p (unwaged)

Twenty years of the Irish war
From Civil Rights to Armalites



TROOPS OUT NOW!

Hands Off Ireland!

At the end of last year a small group of Labour MPs and middle class radicals decided to set up the 'Time To Go' charter. This initiative to mark the start of the war in August 1969 is intended to persuade the British government to change its ways and set a date for withdrawal.

By raising Ireland in the way they do these people create illusions. Why? Because Northern Ireland is not just another colony. It is part of the 'United Kingdom'. A withdrawal would undoubtedly produce shock waves and create instability in Britain itself. And, according to leading establishment politicians, withdrawal from Ireland could turn all of Ireland into 'a Cuba' — a revolutionary state only tens of miles off Britain's shores.

Clearly, a British withdrawal cannot be achieved by appealing to the 'common sense' of a ruling class which knows its interests would not be served by a united Ireland. Britain will have to be forced out through the combined efforts of the liberation movement in Ireland and a genuine solidarity movement in Britain.

Our task in Britain is not to speak sweet reason to the blood soaked ruling class. There is no progressive role for British imperialism to play in Ireland.

On the tenth anniversary of the Labour Party sending British troops into the Six Counties, the Young Liberals and an array of left reformists marched under the banners of — yes, you've guessed it! — 'Time To Go'. In order not to be too closely associated with its 'bring the boys home' politics, many anti-imperialists organised themselves into a distinct anti-imperialist contingent to rally those who held that Britain and its troops could never play any sort of progressive role. Unfortunately this was tokenistic. It was not used in order to build a mass solidarity movement. After the 10,000 had been marched to the top of the hill and marched back down again, the question of Ireland was to be left on a shelf to accumulate dust.

Proof of this can be seen in the reaction of various left organisations to the reincarnation of 'Time To Go'. Indeed it is quite clear that many on the left have moved to the right. Far from building a distinct anti-imperialist contingent, on what is yet another cynical ploy by apologists of British imperialism to massage their consciences, much of the British left is actually staffing the present campaign and providing the foot soldiers to do the donkey work on the ground.

That is why Hands Off Ireland! was formed in September 1988. Its one aim is to build a principled anti-imperialist contingent on the 'Time To Go' march this August. The immediate focal point for HOI! was to

place anti-imperialist solidarity work with the Irish national liberation struggle firmly on centre stage by challenging the pro-imperialist utopia that is 'Time To Go'.

Where the leaders of 'Time To Go' call upon the British state to carry out tinkering reforms to make sure a united Ireland is led by responsible leaders, Hands Off Ireland! puts forward clear and principled anti-imperialist demands: **Troops out now!** and **Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!**, the bottom line for solidarity work in Britain. To call for anything less would be to side with our own ruling class against the Irish people. By demanding 'Troops out now!' and 'Self determination for the Irish people as whole!' we are challenging, head on, Britain's domination of Ireland.

'Troops out now!' because Britain can have no progressive role in Ireland. To call for a graduated withdrawal by a power that has murdered, maimed and imprisoned many thousands over the past twenty years in Ireland, and with the blood of millions upon millions on its hands through its history of colonial domination, is at best naive. Anti-imperialists should demand that Britain is kicked out *now*, and not given the opportunity to sort out a withdrawal in the way most profitable to it, even if this were possible. Nothing but an outright British defeat is in the best interests of the Irish people and the British working class.

'Self determination for the Irish people' because, as democrats, we respect the right of the Irish people to decide their own future. It also means that the Irish people have the right to take up arms to achieve their aims. We have a duty to defend this. In other words, anti-imperialists do not join in the chauvinist chorus led off by the press whenever the IRA or Inla carry out an operation. The fate of Ireland is for the Irish people alone to choose. There can be no British 'solutions'.

Building Hands Off Ireland! and the HOI! contingent on the August 12 march around clear anti-imperialist demands with a clear orientation to the British working class is the only answer to our ruling class and their apologists in 'Time To Go'. There are no short cuts. To turn the August march on its head will require the widest possible agitation and organisation.

Hands Off Ireland! is a principled ad hoc body open to all anti-imperialist individuals and organisations who support our two demands and aims. We are already supported by a range of socialists, communists, anti-imperialists and union branches, as well as Irish republicans. Support Hands Off Ireland! on the streets, in your union branches and on August 12.

Troops out now! Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!

Mitchell

In early May, Hands Off Ireland! organised a speaking tour with John Mitchell, sacked general secretary of the Irish Distributive and Allied Trades Union, and David Rhys of Hands Off Ireland!

John was sacked by the weak kneed Idatu executive for his uncompromising stand in support of the liberation struggle in the Six Counties. Previously, first he and then Idatu were suspended from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions because of his statements about the leaders of trade unions in the Six Counties, who he had called 'Uncle Toms' and 'mafias' because of their failure to take sides against the occupation of their country.

The leaders of the trade unions in Ireland, like in Britain, prefer to ignore the domination and occupation of Ireland by Britain, and therefore went out to witch hunt

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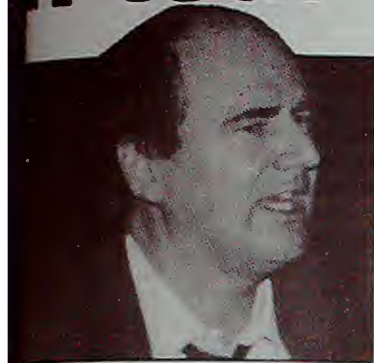
Hands Off Ireland! organised a contingent on the march in Birmingham on May 6. The march and rally was the third to be organised by the Irish Hunger Strike Commemoration Committee. It was to commemorate the death of the ten Irish prisoners of war who died on hunger strike in 1981 and Michael Gaughan and Frank Stagg, murdered in British jails by British imperialism. The turnout on the day was disappointing. The organisers were hoping for 500, but a figure closer to 200 was achieved.

The Hands Off Ireland! contingent stood out by its militancy and loudness. The police, who heavily outnumbered the demonstrators, banned the use of megaphones along the route of the march. Undaunted, the HOI! contingent kept up a barrage of slogans throughout the 2 hour plus long march. We also gave out leaflets which proclaimed: "Honour the dead of the IRA and Inla! Free speech for Sinn Féin and the IRSP". Though we

Supported by an unprincipled coalition of nuns, priests, Irish establishment figures, Labourites and British leftists, 'Time To Go' has attempted to set up local groups, with varying degrees of success. In fact its meetings, by and large, have been few and far between, and indifferent.

For example, the Sheffield launch of 'TTG' was attended by ten people, five of whom came from the SWP. In London's Hackney, its first public meeting had only twelve people in attendance, six from the SWP and six from the SWP. A day school on Ireland organised by Islington 'TTG' managed to attract no one except the organisers and the odd left wing paper seller, most of whom went home before it started. In Scotland 'TTG' meetings have been badly attended, with support only coming from the Connolly Association and assorted British leftists.

tour



John Mitchell
John for breaking ranks on the question. First he was thrown out from the ICTU executive and then from Idatu.

He put his views on this, and on the limitations of a purely trade unionist stand: "Connolly put it well when he said, in 1898, 'we are trade unionists, but we are more than trade unionists. The trade unionist wishes to limit the power of the master, but still wishes to

have masters. The socialist wishes to have done with masters and puts his faith in the collective intelligence of a democratic community'. That would be my view of trade unions, and that's possibly why I no longer work for one".

John, however, has not only stood out for the freedom of his own country, from a working class perspective, but also fought for solidarity with struggles in other countries, from the Philippines to Turkey. Of course, the best known solidarity action John was involved in was the heroic Dunnes store anti-apartheid strike in Dublin, which was won by Idatu members, against Dunnes and the southern Ireland government.

Hands Off Ireland! was therefore delighted to welcome John onto our platform, to speak at meetings in London, Colchester, Sheffield, Barnsley and Manchester.

John spoke about the situation in Ireland, dealing with both the trade unions and the different political parties there. He went on to outline what was needed in terms of solidarity. There was, he said,

an "inverse square rule" of solidarity work: the further away a struggle, the easier to get support for it. This was especially noticeable in Britain when it came to Ireland.

He also highlighted some aspects of the solidarity of the Dunnes store strikers and how it split the anti-apartheid movement in Dublin along class lines: "When a dozen working class kids from Dublin can stop the importation of South African goods after the Anti-Apartheid Movement had spent 20 years going to cheese and wine parties and passing resolutions, it gives you hope of what might be done". There are lessons here for solidarity work in Britain with Ireland.

John went on to put forward his three basic principles of solidarity: "The oppressed in any situation have the right to choose their own weapons, and those who claim to support them should respect that choice ... The struggle for socialism knows no frontiers ... it's essential to attack capitalism at home to aid people abroad".

Finally, he stressed the unity of

the struggles of the Irish and British working classes: "You need to campaign for an immediate withdrawal. There's no such thing as a phased withdrawal; either you're going or you're not ... I'm not asking you to do anything for Ireland that is not in your own interest. James Prior, William Whitelaw and possibly a few others have said that there could be a Cuba on your doorstep. I wish to Christ they were right, because that would be a great example for everybody ... The British and Irish working class have a common enemy. If one wins, hopefully the other won't be too far behind."

David, for Hands Off Ireland!, contrasted the twenty years of resistance in Ireland with the apathy to this struggle in Britain over the last two decades. In part, he said, this was due to the failure to build a principled solidarity movement.

The discussions around the country were varied and lively. Many people wanted more details on John's case and on the situation in Ireland. Some British trade unionists who had not before been

involved in Irish solidarity work wanted to know how we could support the violence of the IRA. Both John and David came back to outline the difference between the unjustified violence of the imperialist oppressors and the justified resistance of the oppressed, which is most noticeable in the armed struggle of the IRA and Inla.

Other speakers from the floor talked about our attitude to 'Time To Go'. Some argued that, for all its faults, it should be supported in the absence of anything else, whereas others stated that it was so bad, it ought to be boycotted. For HOI!, as David replied, the task was neither to ignore it nor to immerse ourselves in it, but to counterpose a principled anti-imperialist platform to it in the sharpest way possible. This is what Hands Off Ireland! is doing.

For us, these meetings were important for future action, to establish links with anti-imperialists up and down the country to carry out future work, most importantly to mobilise for the Hands Off Ireland! contingent on August 12

ns or proscriptions



Solidarity with the hunger strikers were happy to build for the demonstration, our leaflet criticised the sectarianism of the IHSCC, which had refused to invite a speaker from the Irish Republican Socialist Party, despite the fact that it lost three comrades on the hunger strike in 1981.

The leaflet stated: "In its publicity the IHSCC rightly condemned the censorship of Sinn Fein by the British state. Yet we saw the same behaviour by themselves directed against the IRSP. This is sectarianism of the worst kind and serves no useful purpose for the

movement here or the struggle for national liberation in Ireland.

"Hands Off Ireland! condemns such tactics. Those within the anti-imperialist movement who behave in such a manner are their own worst enemies. They politically disarm themselves before those, primarily the British state, who use such tactics against all supporters of Irish freedom. Hands Off Ireland! calls on all supporters of Irish freedom to demand a non-sectarian platform open to all anti-imperialists - in particular those resisting 'our' state in Ireland today, and whose members have laid down their lives in this struggle: the republican and the republican socialist movements. No bans or proscriptions!"

Many of the British left were conspicuous by their absence, as were some of the 'official' solidarity groups. The London Troops Out Movement contingent never arrived, although a minibus was said to be being arranged from

London to Birmingham. The Socialist Workers Party contented itself by shouting 'Maggie Out of Office' and 'Time to Go', but even gave this up half way through the march! Sadly, this was not a demonstration of which supporters of Irish freedom could feel proud.

There can be no doubt the smallness of the march had something to do with the sectarian position adopted by the IHSCC, exemplified by its exclusion of the IRSP - an organisation which, through its martyrs, had earned its right to a presence on an Irish solidarity platform, especially a hunger strike one. We sincerely hope that the solidarity movement in Britain learns the lessons of such events and will in future organise on a non-sectarian, democratic and open basis. If this is done, then the basis will be laid for demonstrations like the annual Birmingham commemoration to mobilise the numbers that the heroism of the 12 IRA and Inla hunger strikers deserves.

Unions

Since its formation, Hands Off Ireland! has always been absolutely clear on the nature of Irish solidarity work needed in Britain. Firstly, the solidarity work should be based squarely on the principled anti-imperialist demands, 'Troops Out Now!' and 'Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!'. Secondly, the orientation of the solidarity work in Britain should be towards the working class, as the only class which objectively has both the ability and the class interest in defeating the British state in Ireland.

A growing number of trade union branches, student unions and progressive organisations have been passing resolutions calling for troops out now and self determination for the Irish people, as well as support for the HOI! anti-imperialist contingent on the August 12 march. It is of vital importance that the question of Irish freedom be fought for within the working class. Particularly in the unions this has been criminally neglected. HOI! is determined to see that this is no longer the case, and that the organised working class takes its place in the fore of the fight for Irish freedom: to unite those fighting for Irish self determination with the working class in Britain against their common enemy - British imperialism.

If you haven't already taken up the issue of affiliation to HOI! and support for the HOI! anti-imperialist contingent, then write for draft resolutions. Speakers from HOI! are also available for branch meetings.

ime To Go'



'Time To Go' doesn't want to turn the tables

Even when 'TTG' meetings have not been a flop they have been politically flawed. Hackney 'TTG' managed to get 100 people along using MPs Diane Abbott and Jeremy Corbyn, along with *Mirror* journalist and SWP member Paul Foot as the pull. Unsurprisingly though, no supporter of the armed struggle was allowed to appear on

the platform.

Unlike HOI!, 'TTG' has only drawn limp support from the same old left wing groups looking for a bandwagon to hop on. For many militants, 'TTG' has nothing new to offer, only more of the same. Up and down the country 'TTG' has found that its cosy meetings are constantly disrupted by activists

wanting to know why 'TTG' refuses to raise the demand for troops out now. They have failed to answer convincingly. It is doubtful whether they have even managed to convince themselves.

The indications of which direction 'TTG' is going can be seen from the way that it is organising for the August 12 demo. The leaders of 'TTG' have opted for a very short route for the demo, and are publicising an un-political carnival in preference to the march. Even the evasive politics of the march have been watered down. The posters for this were to have the liberal slogan, "Time To Go! - Britain withdraw from Ireland!". Now even the second part has been dropped. And to top it all (and stay respectable) the organisers have decided not to have a Sinn Fein speaker at the rally. God forbid that anyone should have a nice day out spoiled by thoughts of the Irish war!

Join the Hands
Off Ireland!
anti-imperialist
contingent on
August 12, 11am
Whittington
Park Holloway
Rd London

support
Irish
political
prisoners

IRSP

Republican Socialist Prisoners Aid is the organisation that ensures Irish POWs of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement receive the political and financial support that they are entitled to as political prisoners. Prisoners' support groups and branches of the RSPA exist in a number of towns and cities throughout Britain. We need your support to continue to meet the needs of our POWs. For information on the RSPA in your area, write to RSPA, c/o James O'Brien, 265 Seven Sisters Road, London N4

Britain's war in Ireland: Twenty years and counting...

'TIME TO GO", says the slogan. But it was always time to go. British troops and their imperialist backers never had any business in Ireland. And since they went in 20 years ago the Irish people have been telling them so through their resistance.

We are often told that, when British troops hit the streets of the north of Ireland in August 1969, they had gone in to protect the nationalist communities. That is a lie.

The Labour government sent the troops in to protect British imperialist interests, and nothing else. Different governments in Britain, both Labour and Tory, had presided over the repression of the nationalist community in the Six County statelet since its establishment in 1922. They never batted an eyelid at this repression. In fact, they defended it and encouraged it. Britain had created this artificial entity, which was fashioned to have a Protestant 'majority' whose loyalty to Britain was bought. It was and is a state which was maintained only through the systematic oppression of the nationalist community. It was, as one of its prime ministers stated, "a Protestant parliament for a Protestant people". There is no way that the Labour government suddenly developed a conscience about this after nearly half a century.

What had changed was the level of nationalist resistance. Since the mid-60s the civil rights movement had taken root and grown. Its demands were modest: one person one vote; an end to rigged election boundaries which guaranteed a Protestant majority; even-handed housing allocation and the disbanding of the loyalist paramilitary 'B' Specials, a particularly vicious and sectarian RUC reserve organisation and the forerunner of today's Ulster Defence Regiment.

These demands may have been modest, but the sectarian statelet



Twenty years of war: the Irish people against the might of the British state

could not and would not give way to them. Civil rights campaigners found themselves under systematic attack from the state and loyalists. The nationalist communities became virtually besieged.

The response was to fight back, to defend themselves. The nationalist working class had learnt the hard way of the limitations of peaceful protest in the Six Counties. The nationalist middle class, who had been at the head of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, ran for cover when the shit hit the fan. Nationalist workers were left to confront the British state alone.

This culminated in the Battle of Bogside in early August, when the

nationalist community in the Bogside in Derry defended themselves with barricades and petrol bombs against the attacks of the loyalist RUC and 'B' Specials - and confrontation between nationalist workers and the representatives of the British state. And the nationalist masses actually beat the forces of the British state back. They successfully took control of their own areas and defended them.

In Belfast, the nationalist areas were under sustained attack from the same forces. The IRA, at this time paralysed by internal dissent and a leadership which was reluctant to fight, proved ineffective in defending these areas. This was

not to be turned round until the emergence of the Provisional IRA in early 1970. As it was, nationalist workers were trying to lay hands on weapons to defend themselves against the loyalist pogrom.

The masses were entering into revolutionary confrontation with the forces of the British state in the Six Counties. They were learning important lessons and actually beating back the loyalists, RUC and 'B' Specials. That is why the troops were sent in - to reinforce crumbling British rule. The aim was not to defend the besieged nationalist communities but to defeat and disarm them.

Britain failed, and it is still failing. The IRA emerged as a force of resistance to the British state, as did the Inla from 1974. Whenever Britain has stepped up repression in an attempt to crush this, it has met with greater resistance. Against overwhelming odds, against one of the best trained and equipped armies on the planet, Irish republicans have fought on undefeated for two decades. British imperialism has learnt that it can kill individual revolutionaries - in the Hunger Strikes, in Gibraltar or Loughgal - but it cannot kill the revolution.

The IRA and Inla have proven that they are not 'individual terrorists' or some Irish version of the mafia, as many British politicians, both right and 'left' have argued. They are a continuation of the struggle of the masses in the '60s for their democratic rights, crucially the right for national unity and independence. The election of hunger strike leader Bobby Sands to parliament in Westminster in 1981 and, today, Gerry Adams of Sinn Fein, and the presence of many Sinn Fein councillors, proves this. The nationalist working class communities see them as a symbol of their resistance to oppression.

Such resistance is a natural product of the oppression of the Irish people. The blame for all the

deaths through the last twenty years of war must fall with the oppressors who are responsible for the war - British imperialism. The IRA and Inla are a response to that oppression. They represent those who have the greatest interest in an end to the Irish war - the nationalist masses. Their struggle, unlike that of the British state, is a just fight against oppression and must be defended. There is no middle ground in the Irish war - only with British imperialism or with those fighting for Irish freedom.

The Irish people fight British imperialism because they have no choice. To live decent human lives with dignity and freedom they must defeat British imperialism and win the freedom of their country.

The leaders of the British state are well aware of the power of the resistance in the Six Counties, and that those who fight are not "isolated gunmen", whatever they tell us. Over the past twenty years this resistance has been the biggest threat that they have had to deal with. More than ten years ago the Labour government's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy 'Butcher' Mason, swore that he would make the nationalist communities "vomit up" the IRA. He failed.

Today his Tory counterparts are failing, as they are bound to. The resistance of the Irish people cannot be isolated to the volunteers of the IRA. They stand in the front-line of the struggle, but it is a struggle of the nationalist people of the Six Counties against the British state. British repression can only create more Irish resistance.

Britain has nothing else to offer than repression. The state they defend has been proven again and again over the past twenty years to be irreformable. It must be smashed, and Ireland united. Britain, though, will not allow this. It has not and will not stand by and watch its repressive colonial apparatus of the Six Counties go under. So it must be forced. The Irish people have been fighting to force Britain out of their country throughout the past two decades. In Britain, we must make sure that their natural ally, the British working class, takes its place on the side of the resistance in Ireland and fights for Irish freedom with equal commitment.

JOIN THE RESISTANCE!

Hands Off Ireland! supports the demands:

Troops Out Now!

Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!

Fighting for the freedom of Britain's oldest colony is no easy matter. To succeed we need a truly *mass* movement on a principled anti-imperialist basis.

Support, join and build **Hands Off Ireland!**

I/we wish to support **Hands Off Ireland!** ☐

I/we wish to sponsor/join the **Hands Off Ireland!** contingent on August 12 ☐

Name

Organisation

Address

Tel.

Return to HOI!, BCM Box 928, London WC1N 3XX (Tel 01-431 3135)

Affiliation: Individuals; £5 (waged), £2 (unwaged)
Organisations: National £25, Regional £25, Local £10